1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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County Clare

to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

When asked especially why they were coöperating, the farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; they always help one another."

Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

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(Humphreys 1965:245). A far more forceful statement is that of Marvin K. Opler and Jerome L. Singer, wherein they address the etiology and consequences of the Oedipus configuration in the Irish family:

> The central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.... An Irish male... beset with anxiety and fear of female figures early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphasis, is justly famous.... all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications.... Irish resistance to role identification... was seen as... having the imprint of anxiety in relations with persons of the opposite sex, ordinarily mothers and older sisters.... [The]... basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt... (Opler and Singer 1956:15–18).

Complementing the Oedipus complex is male solidarity, which has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend, historical sources, and modern literature. Psychologists of Freudian bent see male solidarity as one of the many behavioral manifestations of the Oedipus configuration—based on "male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females," and "latent homosexual feelings;" but many anthropologists (especially functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies where the Oedipus complex appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* (completed in 1912), alludes to the "tragic plight" of many Irish women, past and present:

> *Grania* is... a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas... Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work.... it is not Finn alone who robs Grania of Diarmuid. "His desire was all the time with you yourself, and Almhuin." Almhuin, the charmed circle of hunters and warriors; its modern equivalent was the masculine society of clubs and bars, of wit and talk and stimulus, from which a woman... would be forever excluded... such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines... are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things beside them and do not really care for them at all.... A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar... to realize that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961:145–146).

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275 The best singers will be
293 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[167] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
• [572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
293 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[578] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
293 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
293 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk
[576] who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the free stout brought me in."